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TSA'S SURFACE INSPECTION PROGRAM: STRENGTHENING SECURITY OR SQUANDERING SCANT RESOURCES

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Chairman Rogers and members of the Subcommittee, I am Bill Blankenship, Chief Operating Officer of Greyhound Lines, Inc., Dallas, TX, and I am honored to be here today to discuss intercity bus security and the Transportation Security Administration's oversight of surface transportation security.

In early October, 2001, less than 30 days after 9/11, a terrorist attacked and overpowered the driver of an Atlanta-bound Greyhound bus, took over the bus and crashed it, killing 7 passengers, including the terrorist, and injuring 30. Not knowing if this was the first of a coordinated series of attacks, Greyhound's CEO ordered the nationwide shutdown of all Greyhound service. After about 12 hours, the FBI determined that this was the work of a "lone wolf" Croatian individual, and Greyhound services resumed.

As far as I know, this is the only "successful" terrorist attack on a U.S. transportation system since 9/11. It underscores the vulnerability of America's intercity bus network, and was a wake up call for Greyhound, which is the only nationwide intercity bus system in the U.S.

Intercity buses (a/k/a motorcoaches or over-the-road buses) are inherently vulnerable to terrorist attacks because of their unique public accessibility. Greyhound buses serve every major city in the continental United States with open terminals in downtown locations and operate over almost every interstate highway and cross most of the Nation's major bridges with multiple daily trips.

Several studies in recent years have shown that worldwide, buses are the most vulnerable to terrorist attacks of all modes of transportation. A 2009 GAO Report to this Committee found that between 1997 and 2008, there were 510 terrorist-related commercial bus and truck bombing attacks worldwide, killing over 6000 people. Over 70% of those attacks were bus or bus terminal-related.[1], The Mineta Transportation Institute maintains a data

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[1] Government Accountability Office Report to the Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives entitled Commercial Vehicle Security, Risk-Based Approach Needed to Secure the Commercial Vehicle Sector, GAO-09-85, February, 2009, see page 11

base of all surface transportation attacks from 1970 through 2009. Its latest report indicates that during that period, there were 757 terrorist attacks on buses and bus stations compared to 442 attacks on trains and train stations.[2]

While intercity buses and terminals are vulnerable to attack, their use as a delivery mechanism for other weapons may leave the nation's critical infrastructure vulnerable. This mobility is a material differentiator between intercity bus and mass transit.

Greyhound has responded vigorously to the terrorist threat. Since 2001, we have completed several comprehensive assessments of the risks facing Greyhound and have taken numerous actions to reduce those risks. These actions include:

- installing driver shields on all Greyhound buses to limit a terrorist's ability to attack the driver;

- installing an on-board emergency communications and threat response system on all buses, which includes remote vehicle disabling (kill switch), driver authentication, and an enhanced emergency communications and response system, and finalizing geo-fencing and real time bus inventory components of that system.

- installing and/or upgrading security fencing and lighting and CCTV camera systems in major terminals and garages;

- random magnetometer screening of passengers and their bags at major terminals; and

- security training for all personnel with operational or maintenance responsibilities.

Greyhound has also worked with TSA in a variety of ways, including two programs that involve TSA surface transportation inspectors, the Base Assessment program and the Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) teams. These programs have been somewhat helpful to Greyhound, but are not at the core of Greyhound's security efforts.

Under the Base Assessment program, a team of 2-4 TSA inspectors do an on-site analysis of individual Greyhound terminals, including a questionnaire of more than 100 questions concerning the security practices at that terminal. A score is assigned based on that analysis and recommendations are made for security improvements at that terminal. Some of those recommendations are helpful, although others are not particularly realistic in the context of a bus terminal. So far, there have been 8 Greyhound terminals that have participated in that analysis.

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[2] Mineta Transportation Institute, Terrorist Attacks on Public Bus Transportation: A Preliminary Empirical Analysis, MTI Report WP 09-01, March, 2010, see page 19

The VIPR teams are groups of 2 or more individuals that do "sweeps" of bus terminals looking for potential terrorist activity. Although we are generally notified ahead of time, these visits are completely random. They appear to be more focused on transit and Amtrak. The Greyhound visits are infrequent and Greyhound does not usually receive any feedback after these visits. The visits are useful as a visible deterrent when they occur, but Greyhound's own security efforts are considerably more important in addressing our security needs.

Greyhound has partnered with TSA in several other important ways.

TSA and Greyhound participated in a pilot program to test airport-style baggage screening devices in Lost Angeles and Houston. Results of the program revealed an annual estimate of 500,000 items that could be used to overtake Greyhound's drivers. Moreover, the pilot program proved the viability of reducing national infrastructure risk by deploying TSA surplus equipment, currently warehoused. However, the cost of Greyhound's operating and maintaining the equipment would be prohibitive.

TSA and Greyhound partnered on a pilot program to test the use of canine teams in several terminals. The tests demonstrated that canines were effective as explosive screeners and as highly visible deterrents to terrorists, but were not practical in bus terminals unless used along with the facilities of other modes.

Greyhound participates in TSA's First Observer and TSOC reporting program. Greyhound is an active participant in reporting suspicious behavior and incidents that could be of a terroristic nature. Moreover, Greyhound has adopted "See Something, Say Something" in its efforts to build a culture of awareness and maintains a solid relationship with DHS Intelligence.

Greyhound also participates in TSA's Intermodal Security Training and Exercise Program, which provides table-top exercises and security training and planning tools and services to the transportation community.

Finally, in support of our partnership, Greyhound donated 2 buses for TSA to use as part of its training curriculum at the Transportation Technology Center. In addition, the CEO of Greyhound, our Director of Security and myself visited the Transportation Technology Center in support of their efforts.

Overall, Greyhound believes that these TSA initiatives have helped Greyhound to sharpen its focus on what works and what doesn't with regard to improving intercity bus security.

One area of concern that we have is the "silo" approach to surface transportation security that TSA has taken in the past. This limits the effectiveness of TSA's surface transportation efforts. For example, TSA has funded canine explosive detection for major transit agencies. Greyhound tried to get TSA to authorize the use of those dogs at Greyhound terminals that were either part of an intermodal facility with transit or close to

transit facilities. It seemed to us that with little, if any, incremental cost, canine explosive detection could be extended to many major Greyhound terminals. But we could not break through the modal walls at TSA to make that happen.

We are pleased that recently TSA has taken action to integrate all of the surface transportation modes under a new Director, Surface Transportation. We believe that action should help remove the modal barriers to cooperation and efficiency and provide a better platform for TSA to assess the highest risks among the modes and respond effectively to those risks. We recently met with the new Director and are encouraged that he understands the risks associated with intercity bus service and will move to integrate intercity buses into TSA's security programs in a way that will enhance overall surface transportation security.

The single most important TSA activity with regard to intercity bus security is its administration of the Intercity Bus Security Grant Program. From 2003 through 2011, Congress appropriated a small fund for intercity bus security. That program was formalized in Public Law 110-53, The Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, as the Intercity Bus Security Grant Program. The IBSGP averaged around $10 million per year with $5 million appropriated in FY2011. In FY12, Congress included the IBSGP as one of the eligible surface transportation programs for preparedness funding, but DHS chose not to make any funding available for the IBSGP.

Although the IBSGP grants have been processed by FEMA, TSA has made all of the substantive decisions with regard to the program. We think that TSA has done a good job administering the program. Each year, it has conducted a rigorous competition with awards based on a comprehensive risk-based analysis. Greyhound, as the Nation's only nationwide intercity bus system, has received the largest amount of program funds, but more than one-hundred other bus companies have received awards since the program began.

IBSGP funds have greatly enhanced the security of the national intercity bus system. It helped Greyhound pay the capital costs of the on-board emergency communications system and the facility security upgrades and it has enabled Greyhound to roughly double the size of its passenger screening program. Without these funds, the capital would not have been available for the emergency communications system and the facility security upgrades and the screening program would have been much smaller. It is important to emphasize that Greyhound spends roughly $10 million per year of its own funds on security, including at least a 25% match for the IBSGP funds and all of the ongoing operating funds associated with the emergency communications and facility security capital grants.

For the last several years, the Administration's budget proposal has recommended terminating the IBSGP on the grounds that there was no risk assessment of intercity bus security and the private sector could make these investments. It recommended combining the program with the transit and rail programs and prioritizing the risks within that combined program. We note that both the GAO and Mineta reports establish the inherent

vulnerability of intercity buses, and indeed, TSA has done its own risk assessment and has recommended a program like the IBSGP.[3]

We do think that intercity bus security projects should remain eligible for federal funding, either through a combined surface transportation fund or otherwise. The fact is that intercity buses carry roughly 720 million passengers annually, which is comparable to the airlines. Given those numbers and the track record of terrorist bus attacks, it is difficult to conclude that a federal security program that makes billions of dollars available for aviation security and nothing for intercity bus security is well balanced. In our view, priority projects such as maintenance of Greyhound's passenger screening program should continue to be supported.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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[3] Transportation Security Administration, <u>Over-the-Road Bus Security Assessment</u>, January 4, 2010